



7 Reasons Not to Legalize Marijuana in Iowa

1. **Health.** Marijuana use negatively impacts respiratory systems, memory, mood, judgment, heart rate, coordination, problem-solving, anxiety, psychosis, IQ, learning, etc. Marijuana is much more potent today than 20 years ago, and is addictive. About 9 percent of users become addicted to marijuana. Nearly 4.5 million Americans meeting the clinical criteria for marijuana abuse or dependence. Marijuana users are also more likely to use other drugs. The proportion of Iowans entering substance abuse treatment primarily due to marijuana use has reached its highest point in 20 years (26.3%).
2. **Public Safety.** Marijuana use causes impairment, which can endanger users and other Iowans in the form of traffic crashes, workplace injuries, child neglect, etc. Would you want your accountant, attorney, auto mechanic, day care provider, doctor, pharmacist, pilot or child's teacher smoking marijuana before they care for you or your family? What about engineers or manufacturers who design or make items you depend on every day?
3. **Science.** The consensus of available scientific research does not support "medical marijuana" claims. The FDA, which must approve every prescription medicine in the U.S., has not approved the use of marijuana as medicine, saying "there is currently sound evidence that smoked marijuana is harmful." Several other health organizations take similar positions. What science does support, and what the FDA has approved, are two prescription pill products containing safe and effective isolated components of the cannabis plant. A similarly synthesized mouth spray is in the works.
4. **Costs.** Social costs of legalizing marijuana would far exceed sales tax revenues. One estimate, based on our nation's experience with alcohol and tobacco, says for every \$1 in taxes, we spend \$10 on social costs (e.g., increased drug treatment, emergency room visits, crime, health care, traffic crashes, school drop-outs, etc.). One myth is that many marijuana smokers are imprisoned at a high cost to taxpayers. In truth, very few Iowans go to prison for smoking marijuana (0.17%, of new prisoners last year had a primary offense of 1st time marijuana possession), and nearly all who do have other criminal charges, prior convictions or probation revocations. The justice system helps many overcome addiction.
5. **Economic Development.** Iowans are known for their strong work ethic, and a relatively low rate of illegal drug use. Worker marijuana use is associated with more absences, tardiness, accidents, workers' comp claims and turnover. About 60% of all "positive" Iowa workplace drug tests are for marijuana. The federal government and most states, including Iowa, continue to outlaw marijuana as a Schedule I Controlled Substance, meaning it has no accepted medical use and high abuse potential.
6. **Environment.** Marijuana legalization would lead to more outdoor cultivation sites. These "grows" often result in the destruction of natural habitat from diesel spills, pesticide runoff and trash.
7. **Youth.** Perhaps the most important question is: Is it good for Iowa children? If marijuana were to become more accessible and acceptable in our state, experience tells us marijuana use and associated problems would rise, particularly among young Iowans. Marijuana use can harm the developmental and long-term health of youth, plus it can stunt learning ability and educational opportunity. A recent study shows persistent marijuana use during adolescence can cause a long-term 8-point drop in IQ.